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Lincoln, Abraham

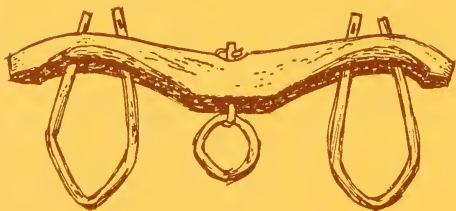
1925

The Bear Coat. Written about 1844.

[140]

[1925 ed.; rpt. 1940?]

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THE  
BEAR  
HUNT

BY  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN



WRITTEN  
ABOUT  
1844



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# The Bear Hunt

by

Abraham Lincoln

Written about 1844

One Hundred Copies

Printed under direction of

Charles T. White, Hancock, N. Y.

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Herald Print, Hancock, N. Y.

# THE BEAR HUNT

1940

Abraham Lincoln neither wrote, nor attempted to write, much verse. He wrote a short piece about a boyhood playmate whom he found insane when in 1844 he made campaign speeches in Indiana in the year 1844. The visit to his old home at Gentryville, Ind., prompted him to write a longer poem, "The Bear Hunt," in which he participated.

In 1925 Charles T. White of Hancock, owner of an extensive Lincoln collection, obtained consent of the Morgan Library to photostat the manuscript of "The Bear Hunt."

The manuscript is one of the most valuable of all Lincoln autographs. Collectors say it would sell for \$15,000. Here is Lincoln's "Bear Hunt":

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A wild bear chase didn't never see?  
Then hast thou lived in vain—  
Thy richest bump of glorious glee  
Lies desert in thy brain.

When first my father settled here,  
'T was then the frontier line;  
The panther's scream filled night with  
fear  
And bears preyed on the swine.

But woe for bruin's short-lived fun  
When rose the squealing cry;  
Now man and horse, with dog and  
gun  
For vengeance at him fly.

A sound of danger strikes his ear;  
He gives the breeze a snuff;  
Away he bounds, with little fear,  
And seeks the tangled rough.

On press his foes, and reach the  
ground  
Where's left his half-munched meal;  
The dogs, in circles, scent around  
And find his fresh made trail.

With instant cry, away they dash,  
And men as fast pursue;  
O'er logs they leap, through water  
    splash  
And shout the brisk halloo.

Now to elude the eager pack  
Bear shuns the open ground,  
Through matted vines he shapes his  
    track,  
And runs it, round and round.

The tall, fleet cur, with deep-mouth-  
    ed voice  
Now speeds him, as the wind;  
While half-grown pup, and short  
    legged fice  
Are yelping far behind.

And fresh recruits are dropping in  
To join the merry corps;  
With yelp and yell, a mingled din—  
The woods are in a roar.

And round, and round the chase now  
    goes,  
The world's alive with fun;  
Nick Carter's horse his rider throws,  
And Mose Hill drops his gun.

Now, sorely pressed, bear glances  
back,  
And lolls his tired tongue,  
When as, to force him from his track  
An ambush on him sprung.

Across the glade he sweeps for flight  
And fully is in view—  
The dogs, new fired by the sight  
Their cry and speed renew.

The foremost ones now reach his rear;  
He turns, they dash away,  
And circling now the wrathful bear  
They have him full at bay.

At top of speed the horsemen come.  
All screaming in a row—  
‘Whoop!’ ‘Take him, Tiger!’ ‘Seize  
him, Drum!’  
Bang—bang! the rifles go!

And furious now, the dogs he tears,  
And crushes in his ire—  
Wheels right and left, and upward  
rears,  
With eyes of burning fire.

But leaden death is at his heart—  
Vain all the strength he plies,  
And, spouting blood from every part,  
He reels, and sinks, and dies!

And now a dinsome clamor rose,—  
‘But who should have his skin?’  
Who first draws blood, each hunter  
knows  
The prize must always win.

But, who did this, and how to trace  
What’s true from what’s a lie,—  
Like lawyers in a murder case  
They stoutly argufy.

Aforesaid fice, of blustering mood,  
Behind, and quite forgot,  
Just now emerging from the wood  
Arrives upon the spot,

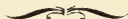
With grinning teeth, and up-turned  
hair  
Brim full of spunk and wrath,  
He growls, and seizes on dead bear  
And shakes for life and death—

And swells, as if his skin would tear,  
And growls, and shakes again,  
And swears, as plain as dog can  
swear

That he has won the skin!

Conceited whelp! we laugh at thee,  
Nor mind that not a few  
Of pompous, two-legged dogs there  
be

Conceited quite as you.













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THE BEAR HUNT HANCOCK



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